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Message Text

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43
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 STRE-00 EURE-00 AGR-05 AID-05 CEA-01

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, EEC
SUBJECT: EC TROPICAL PRODUCTS PROPOSAL--ACP COUNTRIES INDICATE GENERAL OBJECTIONS

REF: EC BRUSSELS 1820

1. EC PERM DEL SOURCES TELL US THAT THE FEBRUARY 23 EC CONSULTATIONS WITH THE ACP COUNTRIES ON THE EC TROPICAL PRODUCT PROPOSAL WERE NOT SATISFACTORY. ACP REPRESENTATIVES INDICATED A NUMBER OF GENERAL OBJECTIONS TO THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSED CONCESSIONS, BUT THEY WERE NOT SPECIFIC IN THEIR COMMENTS. SPECIFIC CONCERNS WERE EXPRESSED OVER PROPOSED CONCESSIONS FOR COFFEE, COCOA, PALM OIL, PALM KERNEL OIL AND SOME FRUITS. TOBACCO WAS NOT MENTIONED BUT IT HAD COME UP IN A PREVIOUS LOWER LEVEL MEETING.

2. THE ACP REPRESENTATIVES ASKED FOR MORE TIME TO CONSIDER THE EC PROPOSAL. THE CONFUSHION IN THE ACP PRESENTA-
TION IS IN PART ATTRIBUTABLE TO CONFLICTING AIMS OF
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OBTAINING SUBSTANTIAL GSP CONCESSIONS FOR ALL LDCS

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WHILE AT THE SAME TIME PRESERVING THEIR OWN SPECIAL PRIVILEGES UNDER THE LOME CONVENTION. THE CONFUSION IS COMPOUNDED, IN THE VIEW OF THE GERMAN PERM DEL, BY THE FACT THAT THE EC AND THE ACPS ARE ATTEMPTING TO CONSULT ON A TROPICAL PRODUCTS PACKAGE THAT IS STILL UNDER ACTIVE DEBATE WITHIN THE EC ITSELF.

3. THE 113 DEPUTIES COMMITTEE ARE MEETING TODAY, FEBRUARY 24 TO DISCUSS THE ACP REQUESTS. OUR SOURCES SPECULATE THAT SOME CHANGES MAY BE MADE IN A FEW CONCESSIONS, SUCH AS COFFEE AND COCOA, BUT THE CONSENSUS VIEW IS THAT THE ACP VIEWS ARE NOT LIKELY TO RESULT IN MAJOR CHANGES. FRANCE AND BELGIUM ARE PARTICULARLY ANXIOUS TO MEET THE ACP CONCERNS, BUT THE OTHERS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ITALY, GENERALLY FAVOR GOING AHEAD WITH THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSAL. THE UK, FOR EXAMPLE, BELIEVES THAT THE LOME CONVENTION SHOULD NOT SERVE AS BARRIER TO EXTENDING TRADE PRIVILEGES TO OTHER POOR, POPULOUS DCS (READ: THE INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT).

3. THE COMMUNITY PLANS TO MEET AGAIN WITH ACP REPRESENTATIVES AT AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL ON FEB. 27, TO FINALIZE THE CONSULTATIONS PRIOR TO PRESENTATION TO THE EC COUNCIL ON MONDAY, MARCH 1. HINTON

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